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Reflection #2

The literature review is extremely important to any project. The focus of the literature review is to summarize the ideas and arguments of important theorists. It gives a synopsis of the development of findings and theories that are relevant to a topic. It enables the researcher to justify the need and importance of the research being done. A good literature review helps the researcher put her work in perspective as the review should reflect current trends, issues, questions and controversies within a topic.

Scholarly journals are considered to be valid and reliable and so are held in the highest regard by the academic community. These articles are peer reviewed or refereed. They serve as the medium for the presentation of new research and the analysis of existing research. The reviews are blind meaning the author is unknown to the reviewers to ensure that that work is judged on its quality rather than the reputation of the author.

In assessing prior research and theorists it is important to unearth the backround for your study and to understand the development of theories and issues. You might ask: When and why did people start asking questions about my topic? What theories developed, how and by whom? Are there conflicts or contradictions in theories, evidence or conclusions? What are the current issues, controversies surrounding my topic? Is the author a credible and reliable source? Is my study worth while and relevant to current issues? Doing a thorough literature review also ensures that you don’t focus on a question that has already been answered to satisfaction. It also helps you survey types of methodologies that have already been used.

Examining current instructional strategies is essential. The researcher needs to know which strategies are currently being used and how they are working in the classroom. Strategies are typically based on the ideas of theorists who are not involved in actual classroom activities. It is the job of the teacher to navigate how strategies translate into practice. The more knowledgeable the teacher is about different instructional strategies the more likely she will be able to reach diverse learners.